



**IT'S LIKE THEY  
NEVER LEFT**

US Military in the Philippines Today 2009

# The Philippines: Land is Life



## Three Regions of the Philippines:

*Luzon*

*Visayas*

*Mindanao*

*7,107 islands*

## Natural Resources

- Fertile Land
- Gold
- Mineral Deposits
- Rice
- Timber
- Geothermal Energy
- Oil
- Fish (tropical and seafood)
- People

# The Obvious Question

**If the Philippines is abundant enough in natural resources...**

**...then why is it such an impoverished nation? Why do more than 70% of its people live in poverty?**

# US Imperialism



"THE GAME OF GRAB. UNCLE SAM (to European powers)—  
Grab anything in sight, gentlemen, but don't tread on my feet!"

Judge, Judge Publishing Company, New York, January 20, 1903  
[artist: 'Zim' Eugene Zimmerman]

- **Imperialism-** *The system, policies, and/or practices of one nation to establish economic and political hegemony over other countries. Imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism. (Lenin 1916)*
- **Direct Rule**
- **Indirect Rule**

# Why is the US Interested in the Philippines?

QuickTime™ and a  
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

-Abundance of  
Resources

-Strategic  
Location



# 1947- Military Bases Agreement

- Granting the United States a 99-year lease
- 20 bases or military reservations in the Philippines
  - Clark Air Force Base
  - Subic Naval Base
  - Largest US bases outside of the United States



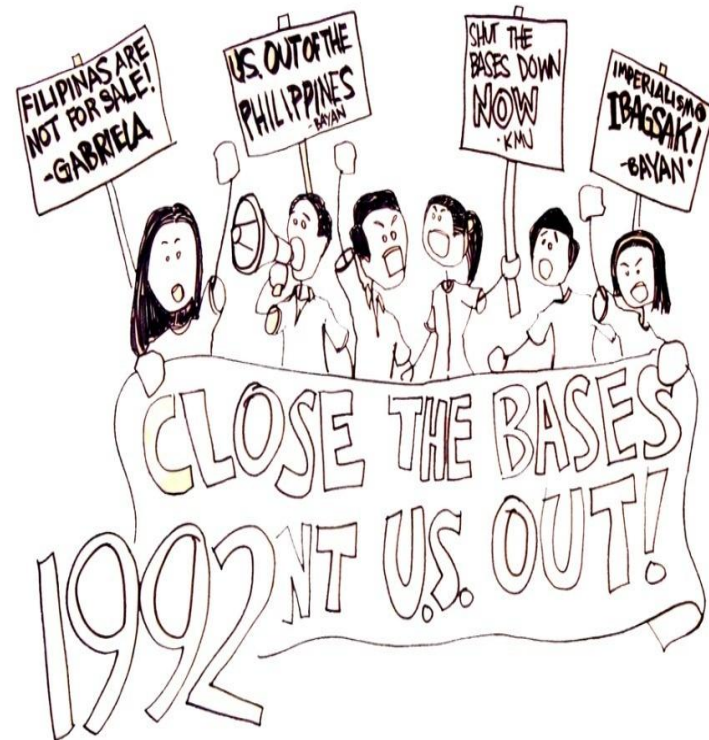
# Social Costs of US Military Bases

- ❑ Increase in prostitution surrounding the bases
- ❑ Amerasian or mestizo babies left without fathers
- ❑ Environmental costs



# Filipinos Protest US Bases

- National movement to close US military bases
- 1992-Bases close under Aquino government
- Victory for Philippine Sovereignty





# Continued US Military Presence

- How did the US maintain its military presence in the Philippines without actual bases?

QuickTime™ and a  
decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

# The Visiting Forces Agreement

- 1999-RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA)
- Legal framework to permit the stationing of US soldiers in the Philippines

QuickTime™ and a  
decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

# VFA: Nature, Scope, Problems

- Unlike the bases treaty, the VFA has no duration. For all intents and purposes, it is in effect...**FOREVER.**



# VFA: Nature, Scope, Problems

□ The VFA does not specify or limit the:

□ **Number of troops**

□ **Areas in the Philippines that the “visiting” troops can access**

□ **Activities of the “visiting” troops**



# VFA: Nature, Scope, Problems

- The US forces can deploy or station an **unlimited number of troops anywhere in the Philippines** for whatever unspecified activity.

QuickTime™ and a  
decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.



# What are the effects on the Filipino people?

- Trampling of Philippine national sovereignty
- Abuse of Filipina Women
- Human rights violations (abductions, extrajudicial killings, etc.)

# Trampling on Philippine National Sovereignty

- Philippine foreign policy shows full puppetry and dependence on US
- The Philippine and US governments have sought to take away the gains achieved in the struggle to remove US military bases in the Philippines

# Abuse of Filipina Women

2009- Case of Nicole (Olongapo)

2009- Case of Venessa (Makati)





# Extrajudicial Killings

- In 2002, Buyong-buyong Isnijal in Basilan



# Accidental Killings

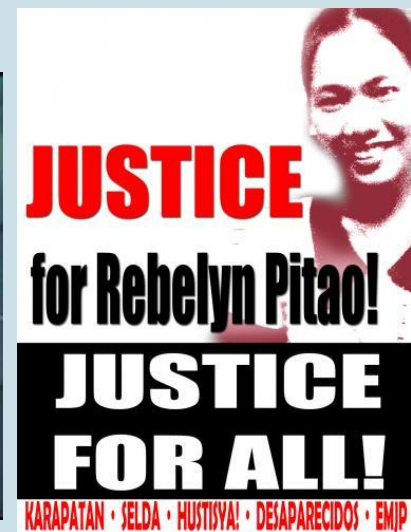
- Balikatan (“shoulder to shoulder”) exercises.
  - US forces conduct military “exercises” on the southern island of Mindanao, in areas such as Zamboanga, Sulu and Basilan, areas that are considered at the center of armed conflict.

QuickTime™ and a  
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

QuickTime™ and a  
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

# US-Trained Philippine Military

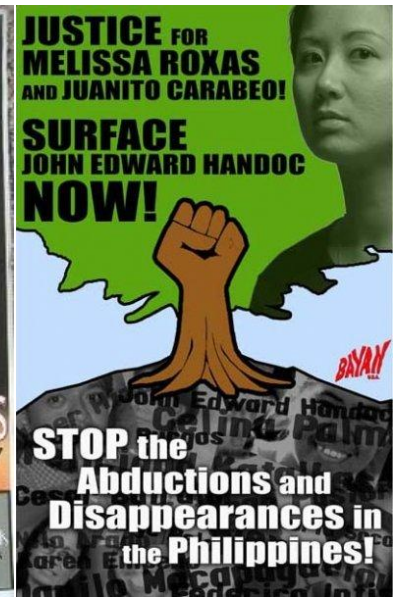
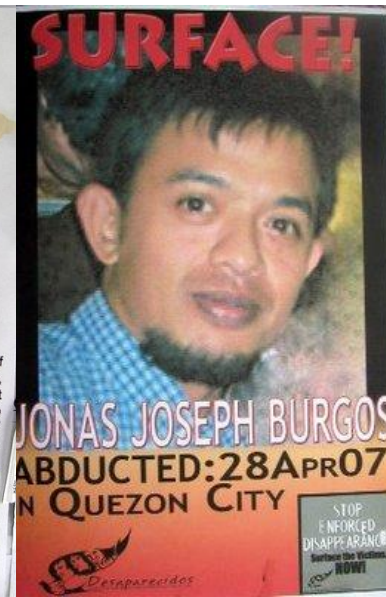
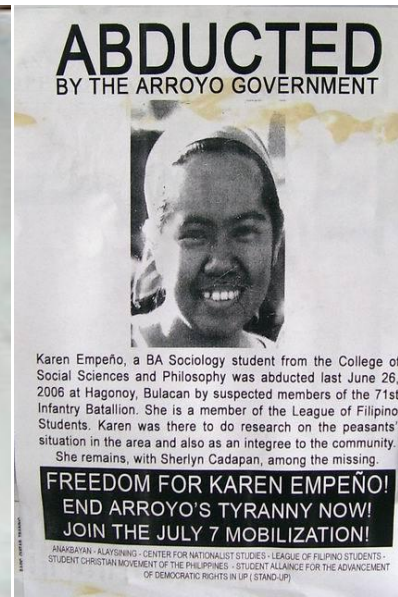
- Massacre in Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac
- Rebelyn Pitao
  - Teacher in Davao City
  - Father suspected of having links to the NPA (New People's Army)
  - Abducted, tortured and killed by elements of the AFP
- Chris Hugo
  - Member of League of Filipino Students (LFS)
  - Addressed various issues of the education system, such tuition fees
- Diosdado “ka Fort” Fortuna
  - Leader of the Nestle workers' union
  - Chairperson of the KMU regional chapter of Solidarity of Workers in Southern Tagalog
  - On strike since 2002





# Abductions and Disappearances

- 2006- Cadapan and Karen Empeño
  - Two student activists who were abducted
  - Reported to have been tortured and raped elements of AFP in Military camps
- 2007 Jonas Burgos
  - Activist and son of the late renowned progressive journalist Jose Burgos
  - Abducted in broad daylight in a crowded mall in Quezon City by elements of the Philippine Military
- 2009- Melissa Roxas
  - Filipina American activist
  - In Philippines volunteering as a health worker in Tarlac
  - Abducted and tortured by elements of the Philippine Military
  - Resurfaced





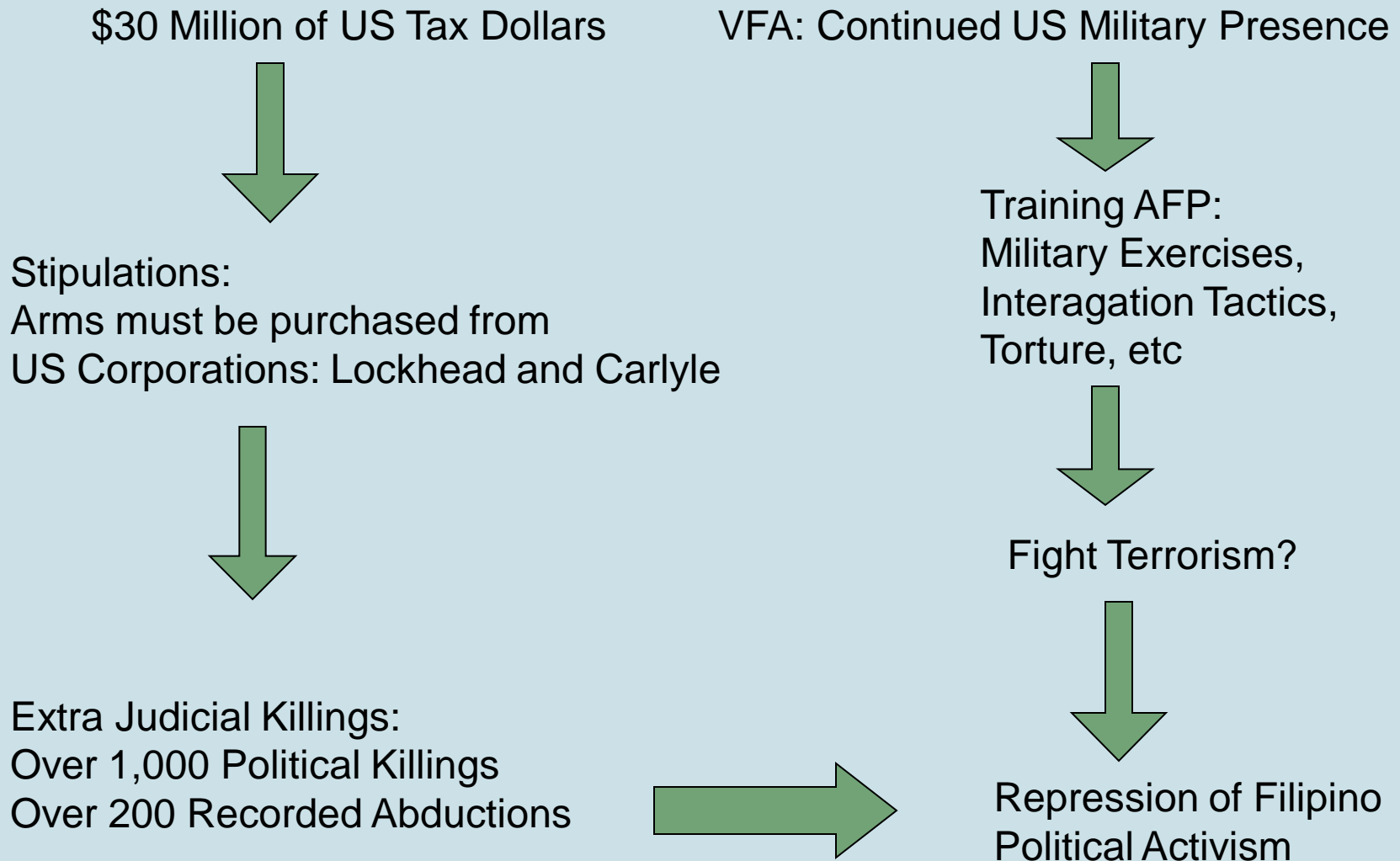
# How are we connected to the VFA?

- **US taxpayers**
  - Unnecessary economic burden
- **US military aid to the Philippines:**
  - 2006 = \$ 30 million
    - 2007 = \$30 million
    - 2008 = \$30 million
    - 2009 = US is projected to give another \$30 million
- Obama's and GMA have already pledged their commitment to a "long standing alliance," particularly the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA).
- Filipinos (Filipino diaspora)
  - Continued emigration of Filipinos from their homeland

# What can you do with \$1 Billion \$ ?

- **14,000** Elementary School Teachers salaries
- **13,789** Music and Arts Teachers salaries
- **146,000** University Students' scholarships
- **2,900** Affordable Housing Units
- **116,000** Head Start Places for Children
- **401,000** Uninsured Adults Could Get Health Care
- **364,000** Uninsured Children Could Obtain Health Care

# US Tax Dollars and the VFA



# So what can we do?

- Get active! Join Bayan-USA and work on the JUNK the VFA campaign.
- Write to US senators and congressmen urging them to cut US military aid to the Philippines
- Sign the petition to Junk the VFA



□ <http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/JunkVFAnow>

□ <http://www.justiceformelissa.org>

- Spread the information
  - Talk to your partner, friends, family, colleagues, etc.

